

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Columbus County (NC) EDC Selects Primus/Garner to conduct Food Site Certification of the Southeast Regional Park**

Gary Lanier, Director of the Columbus County Economic Development Commission, announced today that the County Commission has selected the joint venture of Primus Builders and Garner Economics to conduct a shovel ready site analysis of the Southeast Regional Park for food and beverage company attraction. The EDC decided to pursue food site certification of the Park since food and beverage companies are a target industry sector for the County.

There are over 29,000 companies in the U.S. alone that are defined as food and beverage process manufacturers. These companies combined employ more than 1.4 million people. The food and beverage sector has growth in organics and naturals, ready-to-eat, health and wellness, ethnic and comfort foods and Columbus County wishes to capitalize on this opportunity of potential company locations.

According to Tony Pitrone, Vice President of Atlanta-based Primus, and Jay Garner, President of Garner Economics, the rationale behind the certification program is to help communities succeed by giving them a competitive edge in pursuing food & beverage companies.

"Speed to market continues to be an important factor with our clients in selecting sites or buildings. When we evaluate a community for one of our food clients, we analyze hundreds of variables that our clients consider important in the selection process. By having a Primus / Garner Certified Food Site, you are ahead of your many competitors in showing food and beverage clients that your site meets the rigorous criteria that many companies are reviewing in their siting process," commented Pitrone and Garner.

The certification process begins with a labor analysis by Garner Economics focused on the workforce requirements of the food and beverage industry. This presents solid information to help persuade Columbus County's prospective clients of the value of the site. Both Primus and Garner technical experts will conduct field analysis of the site to analyze its location and value for companies engaged in the food and beverage industry. A building layout from Primus engineers is also included, so that a prospective client can see how a building may be defined at the Park. Ultimately, Columbus County will be provided a report with the Primus / Garner Food Site

Certification label, or in some cases, an action plan detailing specific measures needed to achieve the Certification.

Lanier said, "We are excited about the opportunity to partner with Primus and Garner Economics. We feel that obtaining this certification will let the Food and Beverage manufacturers know that Columbus County, North Carolina has a site and a workforce ready for their business. Columbus County is a strong producer of agricultural products. We are graduating students from our public schools with the Serve Safe Certification through the Culinary Science and Food Processing program in place at the Columbus Career and College Academy. We have access to the strong industrial support training programs that are available at Southeastern Community College located less than a mile from the Southeast Regional Park. With this Food Site Certification to tie it all together, we feel that we will have a winning formula for success to offer any food or beverage company that locates here."

*About Primus:* **Primus Builders is one of the leading Design/Build resources in the Food and Beverage industry.** Primus has successfully completed a broad range of complex food processing and greenfield additions in which they embrace their clients' business and operational goals to implement a single project agenda. They are experts in the specialized requirements needed to design and construct fully-cooked and fresh food facilities, compliant with USDA and FDA requirements, while fully implementing the AMI principles of sanitary facility and equipment design. They also focus on sustainable design and construction, and are a member of the U.S. Green Building Council.

[http://primusbuilders.com/division\\_f&b.php](http://primusbuilders.com/division_f&b.php)

*About Garner Economics:* **Garner Economics, LLC provides innovative economic development solutions in a competitive global market.** Garner Economics offers site selection (primarily in the food and beverage industry), analytical research, industry targeting, strategic planning and organizational development with a wealth of expertise to companies, communities, and organizations globally. Garner Economics is based in Atlanta, GA, and has representative offices in both Europe and Asia.

<http://www.garnereconomics.com/>

See more about the Primus/Garner Food Site Certification program at  
<http://www.garnereconomics.com/pdf/Primus-Garner%20Brochure.pdf>

